

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: April 21, 2021 8:00 AM

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COMMENTS FOR: HB 4459

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Alan Vera, Chairman

Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee

Houston, TX

Alan Vera, Chairman, Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee, testifying IN SUPPORT OF HB 4459.

Unfortunately, this bill is necessary to correct some serious problems with the way certified election equipment is actually configured and deployed for elections. It does no good for the Secretary of State to certify equipment and full functionality, only to have the county election authorities disable features that were required for certification.

In Harris County, the election authorities have disabled a critical function that the electronic poll books display, at the end of election day, the names of every voter who voted at that location. That's critical to the ability of the election judge to reconcile all the critical election data at the closing of the polls. The fact that so many vote centers in Harris County report more votes cast than voters signed in may be caused by their disabling of the display of voter names at the end of the day. That's unacceptable. We think that's criminal.

We have submitted dozens of official declarations from our election judges to the Secretary of State attesting to the fact that they have been unable to see the voter lists at the end of the election day. It's a real problem.

Our election judges have also run tests of the upload time of the election equipment. This bill calls for "real time" uploads and sets 10 minutes as the standard for data sharing across vote centers. Our election judges have reported that 20-30 minutes is the range of upload times in Harris County. We need to fix this.

The bill as filed has left out one important detail. No voting machine should be used in Texas unless that system can recognize a ballot that's already been counted once, and will reject that ballot for additional tabulation. We can't afford to have a voting system in Texas that can't identify a ballot already counted once. We've communicated this to the author.

Please refer HB 4459 favorably to the full House.

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Barbara White

Self

Waco, TX

I support this bill because voting system companies who sell products used to conduct elections in the United States should not have any ties to foreign interests, companies, or governments, due to potential foreign interference, influence and/or cyber manipulation.

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Bill Sargent, Former Chief Deputy Clerk for Elections, Galveston County

self

Galveston, TX

I fully support this legislation. I would make one suggested change to Section 1 (d). The author might want to consider adding

language that says "...the secretary of state shall assess a noncompliance fee, [ADD: or in counties where voting centers are being utilized the Secretary may also decertify the county's participation in the countywide voting program under section 43.007.]

When Harris County was applying to be a countywide vote center county if did so in a local municipal election where about only a third of the county's voting population was participating. Even so, the lag time between a voter signing in at a polling location and that information populating to the other polling places was in excess of thirty minutes. This kind of lag time opens the door where a voter could vote at one polling place, hop in his or her car, and then go to another location and vote a second time. It is critical that there be no more than a ten minute lag time (as provided in this legislation). Failure to comply with this requirement should have consequences that go beyond a civil noncompliance fee.

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Chris Garrett

NA

Corpus Christi, TX

vote yes after removal of section 9

No voting booth machines should be opened to hacking by being connected to the internet. Secure connections, VPN are not foolproof.

Auditing machine totals is useless. This is a step towards recount accountability

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shawn flanagan

self/retired

corpus christi, TX

Vote yes brings accountability to the process.

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Jessie Carlson

self

Corpus Chrsiti, TX

Vote yes. Any interference in our elections in anyway should come with a criminal offense.

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Terry Putnam

Self

Georgetown, TX

I oppose this bill, HB 4459! The intensions are worthy, but, this bills codifies the current electronic systems with some modifications. The machines will be unsecure anytime they are connected to the internet without regard to proposed security protocols. A full verification and validation with strict chain of custody for hardware and software is required and this or any other bills currently in the House required this.

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WILMA JOY PUTNAM

SELF; RETIRED

GEORGETOWN, TX

I oppose HB 4459 because I believe that allowing voting devices to connect to the internet allows far too many opportunities for fraud. For example, how many times have the various voting machine companies insisted that their machines are not connected to the internet. For example, right before he testified before the Georgia Senate re their machine's security, Jovan Pulitzer was able to connect to the Fulton County's main voting machine---INSPITE OF THE CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY BY THE MANUFACTURER OF THEIR VOTING MACHINES.

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Paula Clark

Self

Fort Worth, TX

Please vote FOR this bill

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RICHARD BOHNERT

self A/C congtractor

COMFORT, TX

My name is Richard Bohnert. I live in comfort, Texas Kerr county and I am in favor of HB 4459. Please pass this bill out of committee. Thank you.

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Bonnie Seelig

Self Retired

Spicewood, TX

Support: Voting system equipment is highly suspect in today's elections. Keith Ingram said that Texas systems were not capable of connecting to the Internet. Yet the manuals of all voting equipment companies state (per outside witnesses) that ALL VOTING EQUIPMENT is capable through wifi connections, blue tooth connection on internal boards, and thumb drives. All these options can be manipulated remotely or on site in a matter of minutes. If strict penalties aren't imposed and prosecuted, no one will pay attention to the laws. Laws don't make human beings "do the right thing." Penalties steer people in the right direction.

Perhaps the suggestion to go back to pencil on paper by Senator Hall is a great idea. How about a thumb print!

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Virginia Sidrony

Self Fort Bend County VDVR

Sugar Land, TX

Chairman Cain, Vice-Chairman Gonzalez, and other Elections Committee members, my name is Virginia Sidrony. I am a long-time resident of Fort Bend County, and I am a constituent of Representative Jetton.

I am extremely concerned that some of these bills do not really have anything to do with "Voting Integrity", but actually have more to do with "Voter Suppression".

HB 4459 -I believe that, due to previous testimony given by Keith Ellison of S.O.S. at your last meeting, Lines 17-25 are not feasible financially for Texas, because none of those voting machines are manufactured in Texas. It would also be an extreme financial hardship on all counties to do the type of ballots suggested here.

I sincerely hope this Committee will give careful consideration to my concerns, as well as those od tohers, ewlative to this worrisome bill.

Thank you.

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Beth Biesel, TEF Election Integrity Chair

Texas Eagle Forum (TEF)

Dallas, TX

Texas Eagle Forum supports securing electronic voting systems in the strongest way possible while Texas is still using electronic voting systems. The fatal flaw in this bill is the premise that electronic voting systems can be secured. They cannot. DOD cannot secure the air (wireless networks) nor can they secure their computers (even if they are isolated from the internet), so it is doubtful that any election system vendors could accomplish what the best in the world have yet to accomplish. We want hand marked paper ballots and hand count for Central Count Tabulation. An example of a weakness in this bill is found on page 2 line 8, which states "maintain a secure wireless connection that does not transmit or store data on any device or medium located outside the state; and..." No such security protocols exists.

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Sarah Medford

self; retired attorney

JARRELL, TX

I am strongly in FAVOR of HB 4459 as it will safeguard our Election equipment and ensure the integrity of our voting procedures.

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